

Message Text

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ACTION AGR-20

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 ADP-00 EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00

STR-08 SCI-06 AID-20 SS-14 NSC-10 HEW-08 OMB-01 T-03

L-03 H-02 CIAE-00 INR-09 NSAE-00 RSC-01 P-03 PRS-01

USIA-12 RSR-01 /169 W

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R 091610 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3086

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

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PASS AGRICULTURE

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, IN

SUBJECT: WEEKLY FOODGRAIN SITUATION - INDIA

REFS: A. NEW DELHI 2442 B. NEW DELHI 2548 C. NEW DELHI 2613

D. NEW DELHI 2709

BEGIN SUMMARY: CURRENT FOOD SITUATION IN INDIA REMAINS SERIOUS BUT NO FURTHER DETERIORATION APPARENT IN PAST WEEK. PRESENCE OF JIMSON WEED SEED IN IMPORTED GRAIN MAY DELAY DISTRIBUTION IMPORTED FOODGRAINS. CENTRAL OFFICIALS, HOLDOVER CONTINUE EXPRESS CONFIDENCE THEIR ABILITY SUPPLY MINIMUM FOODGRAIN NEEDS OF POPULATION. END SUMMARY.

1. MOST NOTEWORTHY DEVELOPMENT PAST WEEK WAS WIDESPREAD PUBLICITY OF PRESENCE JIMSON WEED SEED IN MILO IMPORTED FROM US REFS B, C, AND D. ISSUE WAS DISCUSSED IN BOTH HOUSES OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PARLIAMENT AND ALSO IN STATE LEGISLATURES OF MAHARASHTRA AND RAJASTHAN WHERE MOST IMPORTED MILO TO BE CONSUMED. GOI OFFICIALS TOOK CALM ATTITUDE TOWARD PROBLEM AND ASSURED CRITICAL OPPOSITION LEADERS THAT MILO CONTAINING JIMSON SEED NOT RPT NOT BEING DISTRIBUTED TO CONSUMERS AND WOULD BE CLEANED TO REMOVE JIMSON SEED BEFORE GRAIN RELAEASED FOR CONSUMPTION.

2. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS RAISED IN PARLIAMENT DIFFERENT DAYS AGRICULTURAL MINISTER AHMED OR HIS DEPUTY SHINDE GAVE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

A. FOODGRAIN PURCHASES TO- DATE INCLUDE ABOUT 1.5 MILLION TONS OF WHEAT AND MILO. ORIGIN THESE PURCHASES IN THOUSAND METRIC TONS FOLLOWS:

ARGENTINA 216, CANADA 464, USA 814

OF ABOVE TOTALS 190,000 TONS OF GRAIN ALREADY ARRIVED IN INDIA. REMAINDER OF PURCHASE TO ARRIVE BY JUNE 30.

B. GOVERNMENT STOCKS FOODGRAINS ON FEB 1 TOTALED APPROXIMATELY 3.1 MILLION METRIC TONS COMPRISING 1.51 MILLIONS TONS RICE, 1.41 MILLION TONS WHEAT, 0.14 MILLION TONS OF COARSE GRAINS.

C. ISSUES OF FOODGRAINS FROM GOVERNMENT STOCKS RECENT MONTHS WERE:

AUGUST 1972 - 980,000, SEPTEMBER 1972 - 1,105,000 OCTOBER 1972 - 975,000 NOVEMBER 1972 - 855,000 DECEMBER 1972 - 746,000 JANUARY 1973 - 889,000

\$. GOI CONSIDERING PROPOSAL TO APPROACH WFP FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE IN DROUGHT STRICKEN AREAS.

3. ALL INDIA OFFICIAL WHOLESALE FOODGRAIN PRICE INDEX DURING WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 10, 1973 AVERAGED 259, COMPARED TO 256 DURING PREVIOUS WEEK AND CORRESPONDING WEEK JANUARY. RISING TREND IN FOODGRAIN PRICES GENERALLY CONTINUED THROUGHOUT FEBRUARY. SINCE BEGINNING MARCH, HOWEVER, IN SEVERAL AREAS WHERE OUTWARD MOVEMENT OF WHEAT BANNED AND WHERE NEW CROP IS BEING HARVESTED SUCH AS . P., WHEAT PRICES HAVE DECLINED BY RS. 5-10 PER QUINTAL.
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4. CENTRAL AND STATE OFFICIALS BUSILY ENGAGED DEVELOPING PLANS FOR STATE TAKEOVER WHOLESALE TRADE WHEAT TO BEGIN LATE MARCH OR EARLY APRIL. SOME GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS STATE TIME AVAILABLE FOR DEVELOPING PLANS INCLUDING TRAINING PERSONNEL INSUFFICIENT TO ENSURE SMOOTH OPERATIONS OF GRAIN TRADE TAKEOVER BY GOVERNMENT.

5. DISTRIBUTION FOODGRAINS TO RETAIL OUTLETS CONTINUES SPOTTY. IN DELHI GRAIN RATION ALLOWANCE FAIR PRICE FOOD SHOPS CONTINUES 8 KGS. PER ADULT PER MONTH CURRENTLY BEING SUPPLIED ON WEEKLY BASIS. DISTRIBUTION IN URBAN CENTERS GENERALLY RANGES 6-8 KGS. PER ADULT PER MONTH. IN SOME RURAL AREAS, HOWEVER, MONTHLY RATION AS LOW AS 2 KGS. PER PERSON PER MONTH AND SUPPLY IRREGULAR.

6. GOI OFFICIALS CONTINUE EXPRESS CONFIDENCE THEIR ABILITY TO COPE WITH TIGHT FOOD SITUATION NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS UNTIL SPRING HARVESTED GRAINS FROM MAIN PRODUCING AREAS REACH MARKET. THIS CONFIDENCE BASED ON BUFFER STOCK AVAILABILITY 3.1 MILLION TONS, PLANNED ARRIVAL ADDITIONAL 1.3 MILLION TONS IMPORTED GRAIN ALREADY PURCHASED PLUS FACT THAT GRAIN HARVEST ALREADY STARTED ON SMALL SCALE IN CENTRAL INDIA.

7. COMMENTS: MINISTER AHMED' S STATEMENT IN PARLIAMENT THAT FOODGRAIN PURCHASED TO DATE TOTALED ABOUT 1.5 MILLION TONS IS NEW FIGURE. ON SEVERAL PREVIOUS OCCASIONS MINISTER AHMED AND OTHER TOP GOI OFFICIALS STATED PURCHASES TOTALED 2 MILLION TONS. ALSO DELIVERY SCHEDULE NOW EXTENDS TO JUNE 30 INSTEAD APRIL 30 AS INDICATED EARLIER. ADDITIONAL OVERSEAS PURCHASES FOODGRAIN EXPECTED DURING NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS.
MOYNIHAN

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